Dr. Elizabeth Spiller  
English 10123-050: Introduction to Drama  
May Semester, 2003

**Course Description:** This course provides students with an introduction to enduring works in classical and contemporary drama. More importantly, it also gives students tools for understanding drama from a literary perspective. We will begin with major Greek tragedies by Sophocles and Aeschylus as a point of departure for understanding the generic forms of Aristotelian tragedy as well as the performance conventions and civic importance of Dionysian theater in the Greek world. We will then turn to the age of Shakespeare where we will study the development of the first permanent modern playhouses (the Globe Theater and others) and see how the Greek classic are rewritten in for a new cultural context in Thomas Kyd’s *Spanish Tragedy* and Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*. We will look at how Aristotelian tragedy continues to be a component of Shakespeare’s tragic form, but we will also consider the larger cultural implications of other socially and politically significant generic forms, such as revenge tragedy and Neo-Senecan tragedy. Finally, we will move to the contemporary period where we will study three postmodernist revisions to these earlier works in Thomas Stoppard’s *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*, Thomas Pynchon’s *Crying of Lot 49* (a novel, mind you), and Michael Almereyda’s *Hamlet*. Throughout the course we will consider how historic changes in performance structures and media possibilities become integral to what can be staged, how audiences respond to it, and how these plays interact with and comment upon one another.

**Required Texts:**
Sigmund Freud. From *The Interpretation of Dreams* (in-class handout).
Claude Levi-Strauss. From *Structural Anthropology* (in-class handout)
Thomas Stoppard. *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*. Grove Press, 1991,

**Course requirements and grading:**
Participation: 25% --determined by graded daily group works (each is worth almost 3 points)  
First Exam: 25%  
Second Exam: 25%  
Third Exam: 25%

**Plagiarism:** Presenting as yours work that is substantially not your own, be it from verbal, written, or electronic sources, is plagiarism. Plagiarism is not acceptable in this class and may result in further disciplinary action. Discuss this subject with me if you have questions.
**Attendance Policy:** This class will be conducted in an open discussion format and requires that you be available and prepared to participate in those discussions. Because of the condensed format of this course, more than 2 absences will make it impossible to successfully complete this course.

**ADA Policy:** In accordance with the Americans with Disability Act and Section 504, Rehabilitation Act, I will cooperate with the Office of Disability Accommodation to make reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. Please give me a written request on or before the third day of class.

**Schedule of Readings:**

**Week 1**
- **Monday**
  - Introduction
- **Tuesday**
  - Sophocles, *Oedipus*; Levi Strauss handout
- **Wednesday**
  - Aeschylus, *Eumenides*
- **Thursday**
  - Kyd, *Spanish Tragedy*
- **Friday**
  - FIRST TEST

**Week 2**
- **Monday**
  - Shakespeare, *Hamlet*
- **Tuesday**
  - Zeffirelli *Hamlet* (film, 1990)
- **Wednesday**
  - *Hamlet*; Freud handout
- **Thursday**
  - Stoppard, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*
- **Friday**
  - SECOND TEST

**Week 3**
- **Monday**
  - Memorial Day break
- **Tuesday**
  - Pynchon, *Crying of Lot 49*
- **Wednesday**
  - Pynchon, *Crying of Lot 49*
- **Thursday**
  - Almereyda *Hamlet*
- **Friday**
  - THIRD TEST